



Louisville Metro Tree Advisory Commission

Tuesday, September 17 2013 at 5:00

APCD Boardroom

Meeting Minutes

I. Welcome and Announcements -- Katy Schneider, LMTAC Co-chair

The following Louisville Metro Tree Advisory Commission (hereinafter, "Commission" or "LMTAC") members were present: Katy Schneider (Co-chair), Allen Steinbock (Secretary-Treasurer), Cheri Bryant Hamilton, Robert Eberenz, Jr., Scott Hannah, Todd Eberle, Monica Orr, Maria Koetter, and Kenya Wade as well as Ex-officio commissioners Sherie Long and Mesude Duyar.

Katy welcomed new Commissioner, Kenya Wade.

II. Approval of Minutes – Katy Schneider

Co-Chair Katy Schneider asked for and received unanimous approval of the minutes from last meeting.

III. Old Business

a. Update from Office of Sustainability – Maria Koetter, Director of Sustainability

Katy asked Maria Koetter, Louisville Metro Sustainability Director and Commissioner on behalf of the Louisville Metro Department of Economic Growth and Innovation, to update the Commission on old business. Maria reported she has been in contact with Dr. Brian Stone and that work will begin on the Urban Heat Island Mitigation Plan after the grant award and contracting process is finalized. She also reported that tree canopy study proposals have been received, the next step is to assemble a review team. Additionally, Maria said that interviews for the open urban forester position are ongoing.

IV. New business

a. Presentation: "What is the purpose of a Tree Ordinance?" – Ed Macie, Urban Forestry Coordinator, USDA Forest Service South Region

Katy thanked the State Forestry Division for bringing Ed Macie to town and then introduced him. Ed began his talk by identifying the three things a city needs to have a successful tree ordinance:

1. People – You must have a diverse, inclusive, and engaged citizenry. Ed went on to say that people are the most important part of the tree ordinance puzzle and that they are the "holy grail" of the ordinance process.

2. Public – Elected officials and the local government must value your urban forest. Your urban forest must be professionally managed.
3. Resources – Your urban forest should be diverse in age and species. A comprehensive management plan is an absolute must. There should be equity in canopy cover across the city to ensure some neighborhoods do not get left out.

At this point, Ed finished his formal presentation and invited questions from the audience and Commission (what follows is a summary of that Q&A session).

Guest: Do you use Hi-Res infrared imagery in your work?

Ed: Yes and Dr. Stone will use those types of tools in his work here in Louisville. But you don't have to get too fancy in your analysis. Human comfort will lead the way and show you where you should focus your planting efforts.

Guest: What advice can you give us on enforcing a tree ordinance?

Ed: You must have full commitment from local government and the citizenry. However, enforcement is not as important as good implementation.

Guest: What do we do with plantings in parking lots?

Ed: Parking lots are a big key to the UHI problem. You should resist the urge to "grandfather" existing parking lots in your development code. Also, shade increases the life expectancy of asphalt and is good for air quality.

Guest: What are some examples of good tree ordinances for large trees?

Ed: Unfortunately, sometimes old trees have to go. They require a lot of space and maintenance. It's okay to plant new trees as long as you take care of them.

Guest: Are there any local developers that are more "enlightened" on trees?

Katy: We met with Chuck Cavanaugh yesterday and he feels that local developers follow the rules.

Scott Hannah: Elite Homes are good about trees.

Sherie Long: Canfield does a good job.

Rob Eberenz: Are ordinances geared more toward existing or new development.

Ed: They are usually more focused on new development.

Margaret Carreiro: Are there ordinances with restrictions on non-dangerous trees on private land?

Ed: Most ordinances try to avoid that sort of thing. When you see that kind of thing, it's usually reserved for historic districts. Trees on private land are usually not the problem.

Guest: What is the ideal ordinance?

Ed: Charlotte, Savannah, Jacksonville, Mobile, and Austin all have good ordinances. There aren't many cities the size of Louisville that do not have some kind of tree ordinance. Tree ordinances became very popular in the mid 1980's and there are now 1,400 tree ordinances in the Southern U.S.

Todd Eberle: Heavy handedness can be divisive, but isn't there some way to keep track of what's going on on private land? What about permitting?

Ed: You'll need an army to keep up with permitting. You should develop a set of recommended standards and publish it. You really need to step up the outreach/education. You need active programs in your Brightside agency.

Scott Hannah: What do you think of our current tree regulations (Land Development Code Chapter 10)?

Ed: The ordinance really should come first and then you would use a development code to enforce the ordinance. You should look at other ordinances and pick out the elements that would help with your problems. You then craft your ordinance around those solutions.

Guest: Is it really necessary to have a tree-specific ordinance? We already have a code in place.

Ed: I don't know your code very well. Generally, an ordinance is a resolution to maintain/increase canopy. A development code is just part of the solution.

Guest: Wouldn't it be simpler to just stick with what we have?

Katy: The Land Development Code is currently being revised and we are making recommendations for changes. We want to emulate other cities that care about trees. We had to start with the LDC because of the revision process – it would have been more ideal to start with an ordinance.

Rob: How do other tree ordinances work?

Todd: We are just beginning to study other ordinances.

Guest: New development happens all the time. I'd like to see those trees recycled. Can you dig up trees and replant them elsewhere?

Ed: It is very difficult and expensive to move trees and most trees die in the process. It can take years to successfully move a tree.

Mike Hayman: You can plant a lot of new trees instead.

Ed: You really have to take the long view – remember that little trees will get big.

(End of discussion)

b. Miscellaneous Reports

Katy asked Secretary/Treasurer Allen Steinbock to give a report on the Commission's finances. Allen reported that the Commission is very close to having the Brightside foundation established. He also said that people wanting to donate to the Commission can now make checks out to The Louisville Tree Fund. However, the Commission cannot yet write checks. Katy mentioned that this information should be posted online. Gina O'Bryan stated that this account is in good standing and that she is working on getting a P.O. Box for it.

Katy asked Commissioner Monica Orr to give a report on the Commission's outreach efforts. She said that she is working with a graphic design class at U of L to design brochures for the Commission.

One last question –

Guest: Is there an agreed valuation system for trees?

Ed: Yes, you can place a \$ value on individual trees. The iTree model is good for that and you can also do that with a canopy analysis.

V. Adjourn

Katy thanked Ed Macie again for his help and then she adjourned the meeting. The next meeting will be held on October 22, 2013 at the Louisville Metro Air Pollution Control District Boardroom.